



The Community Solutions Program

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS



APPLICATION DEADLINE: 11:59PM EST, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2010

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Community Solutions Program is a professional development program for the best and brightest global community leaders working in **Transparency & Accountability; Tolerance/Conflict Resolution; Environmental Issues; and, Women's Issues**. Selected candidates will participate in:

- **A Four-month U.S. Fellowship:** Fellows are placed in U.S. community-based, non-profit or other organizations, government offices or legislative bodies where they work with community leaders.
- **Community Leadership Institute (CLI):** Fellows will spend more than 500 hours developing practical leadership skills in Goal Setting, Monitoring & Evaluation, Organizational Team Building, Networking & Partnering, and Communications & Advocacy.
- **Follow-on Projects:** Fellows, in partnership with their U.S. hosts, will develop follow-on projects to be completed after fellows return to their home countries.

Sixty-six eligible individuals will be selected to participate in the Community Solutions Program. Financial provisions of the program include: J-1 visa support; round-trip travel from fellow's home city to the U.S.; accident and sickness insurance; and a stipend to cover housing, meals and incidentals.

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE GRANT

- J-1 visa support;
- Round-trip travel from participant's home city to the U.S.;
- Accident and sickness insurance; and,
- Stipend to cover housing, meals and incidentals.

TECHNICAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Candidates will be considered without respect to race, color, religion, national origin, or gender. Persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. Competition for the Community Solutions Program is merit-based and open to community leaders, ages 25-38 at the time of application, who meet the following criteria:

- Is from a participating country (U.S. citizens, permanent residents of the U.S. , and individuals who have applied for U.S. permanent residency in the past three years are not eligible for this program.);
- Is currently living and working in his/her home country (Individuals participating in academic, training or research programs in the United States at the time of application and individuals residing or working outside their home countries at the time of application are not eligible for this program);
- Is currently working on a community project or initiative in his/her home country; and, has at least 2 years of professional experience in this capacity at the time of application;
- Is able to begin the program in the United States in 2011, and is committed to returning to his/her home country after completion of the program;
- Is able to receive a U.S. J-1 visa (Individuals who have participated in an exchange visitor program sponsored or funded by the U.S. Government who have not fulfilled their two-year home residency requirement by the time of application are not eligible for this program); and,
- Is proficient in spoken and written English at the time of application.

**Applications must be submitted online at <https://oas.irex.org/csp/>
Deadline: 11:59pm EST, Wednesday, November 10, 2010**

Current IREX employees and consultants and their immediate family members (spouses, parents, children, and siblings) are not eligible to apply for any IREX-administered grant programs, either as individuals or as the responsible party representing an institutional applicant.

The U.S. Department of State and IREX reserve the right to verify all of the information included in the application. In the event that there is a discrepancy, or information is found to be false, the application will immediately be declared invalid and the applicant ineligible.

Under the terms of the grant and the laws governing the J-1 visa required for participation in the Community Solutions Program, fellows must return to their home country upon completion of the program for a period of at least two years. Fellows are not eligible for visa extensions under any circumstances.

Applications not meeting the above technical eligibility requirements will not be forwarded to the selection committee.

SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

The Community Solutions Program is conducted as a merit-based open competition. After the deadline, all eligible applications will be reviewed by a bi-national selection panel. Chosen semi-finalists will be interviewed by a panel. All applicants will be notified of their status in spring 2011.

Selection panels will use the following criteria to evaluate applications (not in order of importance):

- Demonstrated leadership ability;
- Experience in one or more of the four CSP themes;
- Working/volunteering on substantive community projects for NGOs, government offices, or community initiatives;
- Intercultural/English language skills;
- Preference will be given to individuals with four (4) months or more academic exchange or professional training experience in the United States.

GENERAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Submit completed Community Solutions Program Online Application (**paper applications will not be accepted**), and all additional required documents (see below)
- Please answer **ALL** questions on the application in English (except where specified)
- Include your full, legal name, family name (surname) first as spelled on your international passport (if available). Do not translate name spellings.
- Include complete contact information (including index codes for all addresses and city/country codes for all phone and fax numbers). Do not translate street or city names into English, only into the English alphabet.
- Do NOT leave a space blank. If a question does not apply to you, enter N/A (not applicable)

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

In addition to the completed program application, applicants must submit the following documents through our online application system:

- Current resume or curriculum vitae

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- One letter of support from your employer, community organization, or professional peer in your field. Letter must be signed and on organizational letterhead.
- All applicants must submit official Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores if the test was taken within the last 5 years and the score report is available. If the applicant has not taken the TOEFL in the past 5 years the applicant will be required to take the TOEFL exam in early 2011 if he/she moves into the semi-finalist round of the fellowship competition.

IF SELECTED TO THE SEMIFINALIST ROUND, APPLICANTS MUST PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTATION AT THE TIME OF THEIR INTERVIEW:

- A copy of applicant's international passport (if available) or government-issued identification

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The deadline for applications for the Community Solutions Program is 11:59pm EST, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2010.

Applications may be submitted **ONLINE ONLY**. Do not send applications to the IREX office in Washington, DC or any of IREX's representative offices. Mailed, faxed or e-mailed applications will not be accepted.

COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS PROGRAM TIMELINE

November 10, 2010:	Community Solutions Program application deadline
January-February 2011:	Interview committees conduct semifinalist interviews and semifinalists take the TOEFL exam as needed
April 2011:	Finalists and alternates notified
May-June 2011:	Pre-departure orientations and preparation
August 2011:	All participants depart their home countries for the U.S.
December 2011	Participants return to their home countries and begin follow-on projects
January-June 2012	Alumni complete follow-on projects in collaboration with U.S. host organizations

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PROFESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP THEME AND MANAGEMENT FOCUS DESCRIPTIONS

PROFESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP THEMES

Applicant must select **ONE** professional theme from the list below that he/she intends to focus on while in the U.S. **The applicant's country of citizenship/residence must be listed under the professional theme below in order for him/her to be eligible for that theme.**

- 1) Transparency and Accountability:** Fellowships should provide exposure to institutions and concepts related to civil society, grass-roots democracy, good governance, anti-corruption, transparency, accountability, and/or free and fair elections. The important role of volunteerism and the culture of volunteerism can also be addressed.

Geographic Regions and Eligible Countries:

- **Africa:** Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda, Liberia, Zambia, Sierra Leone
- **East Asia and the Pacific:** Mongolia, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, Singapore, Philippines, and Malaysia
- **Europe:** Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic
- **South and Central Asia:** Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan

- 2) Tolerance/Conflict Resolution:** Fellowships should expose participants to issues and strategies that address tolerance, multi-culturalism, discrimination, and conflict resolution. Negotiation skills, the art of compromise, fair treatment of minority populations, and civil rights and responsibilities can also be addressed.

Geographic Regions and Eligible Countries:

- **Africa:** Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda, Liberia, Zambia, Sierra Leone
- **South and Central Asia:** Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh
- **Near East & North Africa:** Israel, West Bank/Gaza, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria
- **Western Hemisphere:** El Salvador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Trinidad

- 3) Environmental Issues:** Fellowships for the “Environmental Issues” theme should focus on issues related to water and resource management, food security, supporting the food supply (at local, regional or national levels), social entrepreneurship (to leverage science and technology to address ecological and environmental issues) low-carbon technologies, and the use of natural resources, pollution, sustainable energy, and climate change.

Geographic Regions and Eligible Countries:

- **South and Central Asia:** Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan
- **Near East & North Africa:** Israel, West Bank/Gaza, Lebanon, Egypt, Jordan, Syria
- **Western Hemisphere:** El Salvador, Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Trinidad

- 4) Women's Issues:** Fellowships for the “Women's Issues” theme should focus on issues related to women's empowerment, women's education, women's health, women entrepreneurs, gender equality, and the prevention of all forms of exploitation, including domestic violence.

Geographic Regions and Eligible Countries:

- **Africa:** Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda, Liberia, Zambia, Sierra Leone
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MANAGEMENT FOCUS AREAS

Applicant must select **ONE** professional theme from the list below that he/she intends to focus on while in the U.S.

- 1) Goal Setting, Monitoring, & Evaluation:** Leaders need to help their communities and organizations to clearly articulate goals and establish realistic milestones toward solving local problems. This management focus will include the following topics: the goal setting and monitoring and evaluation process; technology for monitoring and evaluation; establishing gender-sensitive indicators; and, behavior change in conflict mitigation programs.
- 2) Organizational Team Building:** To meet their communities' challenges, organizations, be they government offices or NGOs, need leaders who can improve their internal systems and help their teams work together more efficiently. This management focus will include the following topics: internal communications; leading diverse groups; motivation and mentoring; and, creating a cooperative team culture.
- 3) Networking & Partnering:** No leader exists in isolation, nor does the organization or community that they represent. Leaders must be able to effectively connect with others, forming networks and partnerships that are mutually beneficial. This management focus will include the following topics: public private partnerships; managing successful volunteer programs; establishing effective partnerships; and, models for association building.
- 4) Communications & Advocacy:** It is vital that leaders truly represent their constituents' needs, are able to communicate those needs to new audiences, and advocate for positive change. This management focus will include the following topics: social networking and community building; cooperative advocacy; active listening and constituency building; and, coordinating online and in-person advocacy.

The Community Solutions Program is a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, and implemented by IREX, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit organization.